

Tahoe woman dies skiing at Squaw

An Olympic Valley woman died skiing at Squaw Valley on Saturday.

Elizabeth Danel, 62, was on a run off the Headwall chairlift on the afternoon of Feb. 27 when she fell.

Although she was wearing a helmet, resort officials said she sustained multiple injuries after sliding into the trees.

Authorities said she was unconscious when rescue crews arrived. Ski patrol and Squaw Valley fire paramedics were unable to revive her.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Calif. universities reach out to immigrant students

By Tatiana Sanchez, Los Angeles Times

Officials at California's four-year public universities are reaching out to an estimated 10,000 undergraduate students who might qualify for a special loan aimed at reducing their tuition – a program that further distinguishes the state as a national trendsetter in providing services to immigrants who are in the country illegally.

The California DREAM low-interest loans are designated for such immigrants who are enrolled at University of California

or California State University campuses. Gov. Jerry Brown signed the program into law in 2014, but funding didn't become available until last month.

It's the latest in a series of measures that Brown and the Democratic-controlled Legislature have approved to help integrate these immigrants into mainstream society.

Read the whole story

Body of second canoeist recovered from Donner

Divers on Sunday recovered the second victim from Friday's fatal canoe trip on Donner Lake.

Lucas Johnson, 34, from the Auburn area and Joshua Patterson, 33, from Cool were canoeing Feb. 26 when the vessel capsized. Waves that afternoon were reaching 3 feet because of the heavy winds.

Neither man was wearing a life jacket.

Capt. Rob Leftwich with the Truckee Police Department in a statement said, "We would like to remind everyone how important personal flotation devices are. These situations are always extremely tragic and we can only hope we can prevent similar incidents in the future."

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Body in vehicle may be missing Carson City man

By Marcella Corona, Reno Gazette-Journal

Carson City sheriff's deputies found a man's body in a vehicle believed to be associated with a person reported missing in December last year.

Deputies responded at 12:09pm Feb. 26 to a report of a vehicle with a body inside found about three to five miles east of Carson City in the Pine Nut Range.

Deputies said the man they found was about 50 years old and was located in the driver's seat. They also found a gun inside the vehicle.

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Calif. lawmaker seeks mandatory training for alcohol servers

By Guy Kovner, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

In a move to cut down on the deadly toll from drunken driving, a Southern California legislator has proposed a bill that requires training for restaurant and bar workers intended to prevent the serving of alcohol to intoxicated patrons.

Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, D-San Diego, said her measure

was a reaction to the deaths of two UC San Diego medical students killed in May by a wrong-way drunken driver. More than 10,000 people a year – an average of one every 52 minutes – die in crashes involving alcohol, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says.

The state-approved, four-hour training courses for bartenders, servers and managers would include “intervention techniques to prevent the service or sale of alcoholic beverages to underage or intoxicated persons,” the bill says. Other topics include the “social impact of alcohol” and its impact on the body.

Read the whole story

Car chase on Kingsbury Grade reaches 80 mph

Two high-speed chases resulted in three people being arrested Saturday. Speeds at times were in excess of 80 mph on Kingsbury Grade.

The initial chase involving a Mercedes started about 3:30pm Feb. 27 in the Carson Valley. That car at times was clocked at going more than 100 mph on Highway 395.

An hour later another vehicle was spotted racing up Kingsbury Grade. Because of safety reasons officers abandoned that pursuit. The vehicle was later found at the top of Kingsbury Grade in a residential area.

Nevada Highway Patrol officers have not released the names of the men who were arrested or many specifics about the incidents or how the two chases might be related.

ACLU to challenge ruling regarding filming police

By Jeremy Roebuck, Philadelphia Inquirer

Civil rights lawyers said Wednesday that they intend to appeal a federal court ruling in Philadelphia that citizens do not necessarily have a right protected by the First Amendment to record police activity.

In an opinion issued last week, U.S. District Judge Mark A. Kearney wrote that unless a videographer announces the recording as an act of protest or a challenge to officers, police are free to stop it.

“While we instinctively understand the citizens’ argument, particularly with rapidly developing instant image sharing technology, we find no basis to craft a new First Amendment right based solely on ‘observing and recording’ without expressive conduct,” Kearney wrote.

But in an age of expanding surveillance – from instant cellphone photo sharing to increased use of police body cameras – the American Civil Liberties Union and its partners in the case were not alone in raising an eyebrow at Kearney’s conclusions.

Civil rights lawyers say the public’s right to record images has been established in other courts, including U.S. appellate courts based in Boston, Chicago, and Atlanta. Kearney’s ruling also landed in a city with a tumultuous history of conflict over public recording of police activity.

Read the whole story

DOE proposes sparing Nev. from more low-level nuclear waste

By Jim Myers, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON – A state official on Friday welcomed a new federal report that did not pick the Nevada National Security Site the “preferred alternative” for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste.

Instead, the U.S. Department of Energy gave that designation to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project near Carlsbad, N.M., and possibly generic commercial facilities.

“This outcome is what we wanted,” said Leo Drozdoff, director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and a member of a working group made up of state and DOE staff.

Read the whole story

Trump says he will weaken

libel laws protecting reporters

By Jeff Horwitz, AP

Donald Trump said Friday he will weaken First Amendment protections for reporters as president, making it easier for him to sue them.

The celebrity businessman turned Republican presidential front-runner said he wants to “open up” libel laws at a rally in Fort Worth, Texas. The changes envisioned by Trump would mean that “when they write purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and win lots of money,” he said.

Trump added that, should he be elected, news organizations that have criticized him will “have problems.” He specifically mentioned The New York Times and The Washington Post. Trump last month threatened to sue the Post after the newspaper wrote an article about the bankruptcy of his Atlantic City casino. On Twitter, Trump has routinely criticized reporters who cover him and their news organizations, including The Associated Press.

First Amendment advocates condemned Trump’s suggestions.

“His statement shows why we need libel protections,” said Gregg Leslie, the legal defense director for the Washington-based Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. “Trump gets offended, he gets upset and he wants to sue to retaliate. That’s not a good reason to sue someone.”

Libel law in the United States generally makes it difficult for public figures to sue reporters or other people who criticize them. To win such a case, the plaintiff must demonstrate that factually incorrect statements were made with

actual malice or a reckless disregard for the truth.

Trump said he would like to lower that standard. “We’re going to have people sue you like you never got sued before,” he said.

Because the Supreme Court has repeatedly endorsed this legal standard, Trump could not change libel laws as they affect public figures by executive order or even with an act of Congress, Leslie said.

“I’ve never heard of politicians say they would repeal case law established under the First Amendment,” he said. “You’d really need a constitutional amendment to do that.”

Trump’s comments on libel law are not the first time he has disagreed with widely held conceptions of constitutional law. Last year, he said he saw no obstacle to deporting children born to undocumented immigrants in the United States. Courts have regularly found that such children are natural born citizens entitled to the same rights as any other American. Trump has said he does not believe a constitutional amendment would be necessary to get his way.

“You don’t have to do a constitutional amendment. You need an act of Congress. I’m telling you – you need an act of Congress,” he said in an interview with Bill O’Reilly of Fox News last year.

Time running out for drought relief

By Jon Erdman, Weather.com

While this fall and winter have provided needed rain and Sierra snow in California, time is running out for significant drought relief from this strong El Niño as we head into spring.

After an optimistically wet start to the rainy season in the Golden State, including the highest Sierra snowpack measured in five years in late January, February has trended much drier, despite a record-tying El Niño.

Tahoe City has barely managed just over a foot of snow – 13.5 inches to be exact – in February, so far, virtually all during one storm on Feb. 18-19.

According to the California Department of Water Resources, snowpack water content Feb. 25 ranged 84 to 96 percent of the late-February average in the Sierra.

Read the whole story